THE

BEAUTIES

OF

ROUSSEAU;

SELECTED BY A LADY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

"FRANCE HAS HER BEAUTIES TOO."——ORRERY.

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THE

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THE BEAUTIES OF ROUSSEAU.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

MAN, in a ſtate of nature, is entirely concentred in himſelf. He is the numerical unit, the compleat whole, which has no relation to any thing but itſelf or thoſe like it.

Man, in a civilized ſtate, is only a fractional unit, that depends on the denominator: its value conſiſts in its relation to the whole, which is the ſocial body. The good ſocial inſtitutions are thoſe which conduce moſt to civilize

man, to take from him his individual exiſtence, and ſubſtitute that which is relative to convey *ſelf* into the community; ſo that each ſhall no longer conſider himſelf as one, but as a part of the unity, and feel not only for himſelf, but for all. A citizen of Rome was neither Caius, nor Lucius; he was a Roman; he even loved his country excluſively of himſelf. Regulus called himſelf a Cathaginian, as having become the property of his maſters. In quality of a ſtranger, he refuſed to the ſenate of Rome to keep his ſeat; he required that a Carthaginian ſhould order it; he was incenſed at their deſire to ſave his life. He conquered, and returned triumphantly to die in torments. This does not appear to me to be much like ſome men whom we know.

A La-

A Lacedemonian (Pedaret) was a candidate for admiſſion to the council of three hundred: he was rejected, but returned home, rejoicing that there were to be found in Sparta three hundred better men than himſelf. I ſuppoſe this demonſtration ſincere, and there is every reaſon to believe he was ſo. This was a citizen.

A woman of Sparta had five ſons in the army, and was hourly expecting intelligence of a battle. A meſſenger arrived; in trembling anxiety ſhe enquired who were the conquerors. "Your "five ſons are killed." "Wretch, "did I aſk you that?" "We have "gained the victory." The mother flew to the temple, to offer her thankſgiving to the gods. This was a citizen.

All ſocieties, when they are confined

to narrow limits, and are closely connected, become alienated from the great social body. All patriots are unjust to strangers, whom they consider only as men who have no claim to their regard. This is an unavoidable inconvenience, but not an important evil; for the most essential thing is to behave well to those with whom we are united. Abroad, the Spartans were ambitious, avaricious, and unjust; but peace, equity, and disinterestedness reigned within their walls. Trust not those cosmopolites, who in their writings extol the virtues in distant countries; they themselves do not condescend to practise in their own. Such philosophers profess to love the Tartars, that they may be excused from loving their neighbours.

THE PEOPLE.

THERE is but one ſtep from knowledge to ignorance. The alternative from one to the other is frequently met with among nations: but there never was an inſtance of a people who, having been once corrupted, returned to virtue.

A people who are moral, who conſequently reſpect the laws, ſhould carefully guard againſt the ſciences, and more eſpecially againſt thoſe philoſophers whoſe ſententious and dogmatic maxims will ſoon teach them to deſpiſe their cuſtoms and laws, which can never be done without corrupting a nation.

The leaſt alteration in the cuſtoms,

though it were even advantageous in certain reſpects, always tends to the prejudice of morality; for the cuſtoms of a people are their morals, and, from the inſtant they ceaſe to reſpect them, they have no rules but their paſſions, no curb but the laws, which may ſometimes reſtrain the wicked, but will never make them good.

We generally ſee more ſtrength of mind in thoſe people whoſe youth was preſerved from the influence of a premature corruption, than in thoſe whoſe exceſſes commenced before they had power to give themſelves up to them: and this, undoubtedly, is one of the reaſons why a people who have morals uſually ſurpaſs in good ſenſe and courage thoſe who have not. Theſe ſhine ſolely by thoſe trifling, undeſcribable qualities, to which they give

give the name of wit, ſagacity, and ingenuity; but thoſe great and ſublime functions of wiſdom and reaſon, which diſtinguiſh and honour man, by virtue, by great actions, and by attentions to what are truly uſeful, are hardly ever found but in the firſt.

It is only in the early ſtage of their exiſtence, that the people, any more than individuals, are tractable; as they grow old they become incorrigible. When once the cuſtoms of a people are eſtabliſhed, and their prejudices rooted, it is a fruitleſs and dangerous enterprize to attempt their reformation: they will not even permit the examination neceſſary to the removal of their ills; like thoſe abſurd people, who, when afflicted by diſeaſe, tremble at the appearance of their phyſician.

The ſole means of diſcovering the real morals of a people, is to ſtudy the conduct of their largeſt communities in private life; for to examine thoſe who are placed in public ſtations, is only to judge of actors.

All capitals are alike; by the perpetual intercourſe of the people, the diſtinction of morals is loſt: it is not there that we muſt ſtudy the character of a nation. Paris and London are to me the ſame place: the inhabitants differ in ſome of their prejudices, but they have them in an equal proportion, and all their practical rules are the ſame. We know the ſort of men who attend on courts: we know what bonds the aſſociation of an infinite number of people, and the inequality of fortune, produces every where. When I hear of a town that reckons

two hundred thouſand inhabitants, I know immediately how they live; what I could learn of particular ſituations would not repay me for an examination of them. It is in remote provinces, where there is leſs intercourſe, leſs commerce, leſs travelling, where the inhabitants are leaſt ſubject to a change of fortune and ſtation, that we muſt go to ſtudy the genius and morals of a nation. See the metropolis, but ſtudy the nation at a diſtance. The character of a Frenchman muſt be ſought in Turin, not in Paris. An Engliſhman is better known for ſuch in Mercia than in London; as a Spaniard is more a Spaniard in Galicia than in Madrid. It is at theſe diſtances that a people are characteriſed, and ſhew themſelves without diſguiſe. It is there that the good and

bad

bad effects of a government are beſt known; as the meaſure of an arch is the moſt exact, at the end of thoſe rays that are the moſt extended.

It is the people who compoſe human nature; and thoſe who do not come under this deſcription are ſo few that they are not worth numbering. Man is the ſame in every country; if ſo, thoſe that are the moſt populous are intitled to the greateſt reſpect. All civil diſtinctions diſappear before a thinking being: he ſees the ſame paſſions, the ſame ideas pervade the mind of the moſt illuſtrious peer and the commoneſt peaſant; he only diſcerns a gloſs in the language and appearance of the one which the other has not: if any material difference diſtinguiſhes them, it is to the prejudice of him who aſſumes a diſguiſe. The people ſhew

them-

themſelves as they are, and do not, certainly, inſpire much admiration: the men of the world know the neceſſity of diſguiſing themſelves; were they to exhibit themſelves as they really are, they would create horror.

GOVERNMENT.

IT is well to know how to employ men as they are, but it is infinitely better to be able to render them what it is neceſſary they ſhould be. This was the great art of the ancient governments in thoſe remote times when the philoſophers gave laws to the people, and employed their authority only to render them wiſe and happy. To govern a people, it is neceſſary to form them; to make them obedient to the laws, it is neceſſary they ſhould know their value, and conſequently reſpect them: it ſhould be ſufficient to remind them of what they ought to do, to influence them to do it: in a word, virtue ſhould preſide in every government.

In

In a well conſtituted government there are few puniſhments; not becauſe pardons are frequent, but becauſe there are few criminals. The multiplicity of crimes, when a ſtate is in its decline, renders their puniſhment impoſſible. Under the Roman republic, neither the Senate or the Conſuls ever attempted to remit a puniſhment: the people themſelves never did, though they ſometimes revoked their ſentence. The frequency of pardons announces that the criminals will ſoon ceaſe to want them: the conſequence of this is evident.

When puniſhments are often inflicted, it is a certain proof of the weakneſs or indolence of a government: there are few people ſo wicked but that they might be rendered uſeful in ſome one reſpect or other; and we have no

right

right to put any body to death as an example, but him whoſe life could not be preſerved without danger.

An eaſy and ſimple rule for judging the relative excellence of a government is population: in all countries where it decreaſes, the ſtate is falling to decay, as thoſe in which it increaſes, however poor they may be, are infallibly the beſt governed. But, to make this a juſt criterion, we muſt conſider the cauſes of this population: it muſt be a natural effect of the government; for, if it is only produced by depopulating its colonies, or any other adventitious and tranſient cauſe, the evil is proved by the remedy. When Auguſtus inſtituted the law againſt celibacy, that law proclaimed the approaching decline of the Roman empire. The excellence of the govern-

ment

ment ſhould encourage matrimony, not the laws enforce it. We muſt not examine what is effected by force; for the law which combats the conſtitution, is fruſtrated and becomes fruitleſs; but what is effected through the influence of morality, and by the natural tendency of the government; for ſuch alone produce a permanent conſequence. It was the policy of the *good* Abbé de Saint Peèrre to ſeek ſome trivial remedy for each particular ill, inſtead of tracing them to their common ſource, and perceiving that they could only be cured by one comprehenſive remedy. A good phyſician does not treat each ulcer that appears on the body of his patient ſeparately, but purifies the maſs of blood which produced them. I am

told

told that prizes are given in England to encourage agriculture; I require no other proof of its approaching decline.

The ſecond mark of the relative goodneſs of a government and the laws is drawn alſo from population, but in a different manner, that is to ſay, from the diſtribution, not from the quantity. Two ſtates equal in extent and the number of inhabitants, may be very unequal in ſtrength; the moſt powerful of the two will always be that in which the people are diſtributed with moſt equality throughout the territory: that which hath not ſuch large towns, and conſequently makes the leaſt ſhew, will always conquer the other. It is the great towns that exhauſt a ſtate and diminiſh its ſtrength.

The

The riches they produce are ſuperficial and illuſive, much money and little effect.

It is of little uſe to ſee the apparent form of a government, with all the varniſh and preparation of adminiſtration, and all the jargon of adminiſtrators, if we did not alſo ſtudy the nature of it, by examining the effect it produces in the people, and in every part of the adminiſtration. The different forms of the foundation extending to all theſe parts, it is only by conſidering them all that the difference can be known. In ſome countries, it is by the manœuvres of the deputies that the ſpirit of the miniſtry is underſtood: in others, it is neceſſary to ſee the election of members of parliament, to judge if it be true that the nation

is free. In all countries whatever, it is impoſſible that any body who has ſeen only the towns can judge of the government; for the ſpirit of it operates differently in the town and country. Now, it is the country, and the inhabitants of it, that form a nation.

There are governments without a character, as there are perſons without phyſiognomy. The one no more requires an hiſtorian than the other does a painter: as ſoon as we know what place a man occupies in ſuch a government, we know immediately all that he will do.

Whenever a people rebel againſt the laws, it is certain that the example has been given them by the principals who have firſt infringed them. It is on this

infallible

infallible principle, that, in China, when there is a revolt in any of the provinces, the governor is always the firſt whom they puniſh.

KINGS AND KINGDOMS.

ARCHIMEDES, ſeated quietly on the banks of a river, and floating, without difficulty, a large veſſel, repreſents to us a ſkilful monarch governing in his cloſet his immenſe territory, and putting every wheel in motion while he appears inactive. The greateſt kings that have been celebrated in hiſtory were not educated for ſovereignty. Reigning is a ſcience that is the leaſt underſtood by thoſe who have practiſed it too much; it is acquired better by obeying than commanding.

To govern a monarchical ſtate well, it is requiſite that the faculties of him who preſides over it ſhould be proportioned to the magnitude and extent of his dominions. It is eaſier to conquer than

than to rule. Having a competent leaver, we might ſhake the univerſe with a finger, but to ſuſtain it would require the ſhoulders of Hercules.

The art of reigning conſiſts in being the guarantee of the laws, in diſcovering various means of making them reſpected. A weak man, if he is obeyed, can, as well as another, puniſh crimes; but a wiſe ſtateſman knows how to prevent them; it is over the inclinations, even more than the actions, that he extends his reſpectable empire. If he could influence every body to act as they ought, there would be nothing left for him to do, the chef-d'œuvre of his labours would be that he might remain inactive.

The only panegyric worthy of a monarch, is that which proceeds, not from

the mouth of a mercenary orator, but from the voice of a free people.

Let monarchs diſdain not to admit to their council thoſe moſt capable of adviſing them; let them renounce that abſurd prejudice, invented by the pride of the great, that the art of guiding the people is more difficult than that of enlightening them; as if it were not eaſier to engage men to act as they ought willingly, than to oblige them to it. Let learned men of eminence find an honourable aſylum in their courts; let them obtain the only recompence worthy of them, that of contributing, by their credit, to the happineſs of the people to whom they ſhall have taught wiſdom. It is by theſe means alone that they can judge of the wonderful powers of virtue, ſcience, and authority,

rity, animated by a noble emulation, and voting in concert to promote the happineſs of all human kind. But, whilſt power is alone on the one hand, knowledge and wiſdom alone on the other, learned men will ſeldom think on important ſubjects, princes will ſtill ſeldomer perform great actions, and the people will continue to be corrupted, contemptible, and unhappy.

LEGISLATORS.

HE who dares undertake to inſtitute a people, ſhould feel himſelf capable of changing, in a manner, human nature; of transforming each individual, who is of himſelf a ſingle and complete whole, into a part of a greater whole, from which this individual receives, in ſome meaſure, his life and being; to new model the mind of man; to give him additional ſtrength; to ſubſtitute a partial and moral exiſtence to the independent and phyſical exiſtence we have received from nature. He muſt, in ſhort, deprive man of his peculiar ſtrength, to give him that which is foreign, and of which he can make no uſe without the aſſiſtance of others. In proportion to the annihilation

lation of his natural ſtrength will that which he has acquired become powerful and durable, and the more ſolid and perfect will be the inſtitution: ſo that, if each citizen is nothing, or can do nothing, but in conjunction with all the others, and the acquired ſtrength of the whole is equal or ſuperior to the ſum of natural ſtrength of all the individuals, we may pronounce that the Legiſlature is in the higheſt degree of attainable perfection.

If it is true, that a great monarch is an uncommon character, how much more ſo muſt be that of a great legiſlator: the firſt has only to execute the plan which the other forms; the latter is the mechanic who invents the machine, the firſt only the workman who gives it motion.

The

The ancient lawgivers put their deciſions into the mouths of their gods, to lead by divine authority thoſe who were not to be influenced by human wiſdom. But all men are not gifted with the power of making the gods ſpeak, nor of being believed when they announce themſelves for their interpreters. The ſuperior mind of a legiſlator is the true miracle that ſhould prove his miſſion. Every man may purchaſe an oracle, or pretend a ſecret commerce with ſome divinity, or inſtruct a bird to pronounce ſentences in his ear, or find ſome other groſs methods of impoſing on the people. He who can do but even this, may chance to aſſemble a multitude of madmen or fools, but he will never found an empire, and his extravagant work will

periſh

periſh with him. Idle deluſions form only temporary ties; wiſdom alone can render them permanent. The Judaic law is ſtill in force; that of the ſons of Iſhmael, which, during ten ages, has governed half the world, announces, even at the preſent day, the great men who dictated them: and, whilſt proud philoſophy, or the blind rage of faction, ſees in them only happy impoſtors, the true politician admires, in their inſtitutions, that ſublime and powerful genius which preſides in a permanent eſtabliſhment.

A people become celebrated only when the Legiſlature is declining. It is unknown during how many ages the inſtitutions of Lycurgus formed the happineſs of the Spartans before they were diſtinguiſhed in the other parts of Greece.

THE LAWS.

IT is to the laws alone that men are indebted for juſtice and liberty. It is this ſalutary organ of the will of all, that re-eſtabliſhes in right the natural equality between men. It is this celeſtial voice which dictates to each citizen the precepts of public reaſon, and teaches him to act conſonant to the maxims of his proper judgment, and not to be in contradiction with himſelf. It is by the laws alone, that thoſe who have command ſhould rule; for, when a man attempts to ſubject another to his private will, independently of the laws, he then quits his civil ſtation, and oppoſes himſelf to him in the pure ſtate of nature, in which obedience is never preſcribed but in caſes of neceſſity.

ceſſity. The abuſe of the laws ſerves the powerful at once as arms of offence and a ſhield againſt the weak; the pretext of public good is always the moſt dangerous ſcourge of the people. The moſt neceſſary, and, perhaps, the moſt difficult thing in a government, is to preſerve that ſtrict integrity which diſpenſes equal juſtice to all, and, above all things, protects the poor againſt the tyranny of the rich. The greateſt evil already exiſts, when there are poor to defend, and rich to reſtrain. It is over a ſtate of mediocrity alone that the laws have their whole force; they are equally impotent againſt the treaſures of the rich, and the miſeries of the poor. The firſt elude, the laſt eſcape from them; one breaks the toil, the other ſlips through it.

No condition that is impoſed on an individual

individual by the community can be deemed burthenſome. The worſt law is ſtill preferable to the beſt maſter, for all maſters have prepoſſeſſions. The law hath none.

The fate of liberty depends on the laws; it flouriſhes or dies with them.

The more the laws are increaſed, the more they are deſpiſed; it is introducing other abuſes without correcting thoſe which before exiſted: and the ſuperintendants that are appointed are only new violators deſtined to ſhare the ſpoils with the former, or to plunder for themſelves. Soon does the reward intended for virtue become the recompence of knavery; the worſt men are in the higheſt credit: the greater they are, the more deſpicable; their infamy is announced by their dignities; they are diſhonoured by their honours: if

they

they purchaſe the ſuffrage of their chiefs, or the protection of women, it is to ſell, in their turn, juſtice, their duty, and the ſtate; and the people, not perceiving that their vices are the original cauſe of their miſery, murmur, and exclaim, with ſighs, *All our ills ariſe from thoſe whom we pay to guard us from them.*

In a well-ordered government no exemption from the obſervance of the laws will, on any account, be allowed. Even thoſe citizens, who have merited a recompence from their country, ſhould be rewarded by dignities, not by privileges; for the republic is on the verge of ruin, when its members think it deſirable to be exempted from obeying the laws.

The moſt important of all laws, that which is engraved neither on mar-

ble

ble or braſs, but in the hearts of the citizens, which forms the true conſtitution of the ſtate, which gains new ſtrength every day, which, whilſt other laws are declining, or become obſolete, reanimates or ſupplies their place, which preſerves in the people the ſpirit of their inſtitution, and inſenſibly ſubſtitutes the force of habit to that of authority; this law, ſo powerful, and ſo ſolid, is morality, the cuſtom, and, above all, opinion. Our politicians are unacquainted with this part of legiſlation, on which the ſucceſs of all the others depends; but the great legiſlator ſtudies it in ſecret, whilſt he appears to confine his attention to ſome particular rules. Theſe, however, are only the centre of the arch, of which the morals, more ſlow in their progreſs, form at length the immoveable keyſtone.

ARBITRARY

ARBITRARY POWER.

WHEN will men understand that there is no disorder so fatal as the arbitrary power by which they think to remedy it? This power is of itself the worst of all disorders: employing such means for the precluſion of them, is like killing a person to prevent their having a fever.

LIBERTY.

IT is ſometimes with liberty as with innocence and virtue: the value of it is only known whilſt we are in poſſeſſion of it; when loſt, the reliſh for it is loſt alſo. "I know the delights of your country," ſaid Braſides to a Satrap, who was comparing the city of Sparta with that of Perſepolis, "but you cannot be acquainted with the pleaſures of mine."

Slaves loſe every ſentiment in their fetters, even to the deſire of freedom: they take the ſame pleaſure in their ſervitude that the companions of Ulyſſes did in their brutality.

It is a very difficult taſk to reduce thoſe to obedience who are not ambitious of commanding; and the moſt

ſkilful policy would be baffled in its attempt to ſubject men whoſe only deſire is freedom: but inequality is eaſily extended among men of an ambitious or mean diſpoſition, who are ever ready to purſue fortune in all her turns, and to govern or obey, almoſt indifferently, as ſhe favours or frowns upon them.

There are few men whoſe principles are ſo pure as to admit of their being ſufficiently fond of liberty. All would command, and at that price none fear to obey. * Such give themſelves a hundred maſters to acquire ten lackeys. Obſerve the pride of the noblemen in a monarchy, with what emphaſis they pronounce the words *ſervice* and *ſerve*,

* To keep a race of flick'ring knaves,
He grows himſelf the worſt of ſlaves.
SHENSTONE.

how great and reſpectable they think themſelves when they have obtained the honour of ſaying, *the king, my maſter*, and how they deſpiſe the republicans, who have only their freedom to boaſt, but who, nevertheleſs, are certainly more noble than them.

It is inconteſtable, and the fundamental maxim of all political right, that the people elect a chief to defend their liberty, not to enſlave them. "If we have a prince," ſaid Pliny to Trajan, "it is becauſe we expect he ſhould prevent our having a maſter."

To renounce our liberty, is to yield up our quality of men, the rights of humanity, and even our duties. There is no poſſible recompence for him who thus renounces all. Such a renunciation is incompatible with the nature of man. To yield the freedom of will

is

is to give up the morality of our actions.

Thoſe civilians, who have gravely pronounced that the child of a ſlave is born a ſlave, have decided, in other words, that a man is not born a man.

Man acquires, in a civil ſtate, that moral liberty which alone can render him truly maſter of himſelf: following the impulſe of inclination alone, is ſlavery; obedience to the law we preſcribe to ourſelves, liberty.

It is the ſtrength of the ſtate alone that can give freedom to its members.

DEPENDENCE.

THERE are two ſorts of dependence, that of things, which is derived from nature, and that of men, which hath its origin in ſociety. The dependence of things, having no relation to morality, is not prejudicial to liberty, or productive of vice; the dependence of men, being illicit, produces them all. It is this dependence that engenders mutual depravity between the maſter and ſlave. If there is any remedy for this evil in ſociety, it is in ſubſtituting the law to man, in arming the general will with a real force ſuperior to the action of all particular will. If the law of nations could obtain, like that of nature, an inflexibility which no human power might ſubdue,

ſubdue, the dependence of men would again become that of things; all the advantages of the natural would be added to thoſe of the civil ſtate in a republic; and to the liberty which preſerves man from vice, would be united the morality which elevates him to virtue.

WAR.

WAR is not a relation of man to man, but of ſtate to ſtate, in which individuals are only enemies from accident, not as men, nor even as citizens, but as ſoldiers; not as the inhabitants of a country, but as its defenders. In ſhort, each ſtate can only have other ſtates, and not men, for its enemies: as between things of a different nature it is impoſſible to fix any true relation.

This principle is even conformable to the eſtabliſhed maxims of all times, and to the conſtant practice of all governments. Declarations of war are not ſo much intended to warn the powers as their ſubjects. The ſtranger, whether king, individual, or people, who

who murders or ravages the ſubjects without declaring war againſt the prince, is not an enemy but a robber. Even in open war, a juſt prince, though he ſeizes all that belongs to the public in the enemy's country, reſpects the perſons and property of individuals; he reſpects thoſe claims on which his own are founded. The end of the war being the deſtruction of the enemy's dominions, we are authorized to deſtroy the defenders of them while they continue in arms; but the inſtant they relinquiſh them and ſurrender, they reſume their original ſtation of ſimple individuals over whoſe lives we have no longer any power. It is poſſible ſometimes to deſtroy a ſtate without deſtroying a ſingle ſubject of it. But war gives no power that is not neceſſary to its end.

THE REVENUE AND TAXES.

THE moſt important rule in the adminiſtration of the revenue, is to be more ſtudious to circumſcribe the wants than to augment the finances. The governments of former times did more with their *œconomy* than ours with all its treaſures. All the books and accounts of the ſuperintendents are infinitely better calculated to conceal, than detect their diſhoneſty; prudence is never ſo prompt to invent new precautions as knavery is to elude them. How much better would it be, therefore, inſtead of truſting to regiſters and papers, to place the finances in the hands of thoſe who are to be confided in: this is the only means

means by which they can be properly directed. Virtue is the ſole inſtrument of any efficacy in this delicate part of the adminiſtration.

The taxes ſhould be levied according to the property of him who is taxed. He who poſſeſſes ten times more than another, ſhould pay ten times more. Thoſe who have bare neceſſaries, ſhould not pay any thing; but thoſe who have ſuperfluities, ſhould be obliged to contribute all that is not abſolutely neceſſary. It will be objected by ſome, perhaps, that conſideration ſhould be had to rank; that what is ſuperfluous for an inferior, is neceſſary to one who is placed in a more exalted ſtation: but this is a falſe argument; for a nobleman has no more natural wants than a clown, and has the ſame powers given him to ſup-

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ply them: and further, theſe imaginary requiſites are ſo far from being neceſſary to the ſupport of his rank, that, if he could perſuade himſelf to relinquiſh them on a laudable occaſion, he would be infinitely more reſpected. The people would worſhip a miniſter who walked to the council becauſe he had ſold his equipage to anſwer a preſſing demand of the ſtate. In fine, the laws do not preſcribe magnificence to any body, and decorum is never to be preferred to juſtice.

Large taxes ſhould be levied on equipages and attendants; on ſilks, jewels, and ornaments of every kind; on the gardens and pleaſure grounds of fine houſes; on every public place; on all idle and uſeleſs profeſſions, ſuch as players, ſingers, and dancers; in fine, on that immenſe body of luxury, diverſion,

diverſion, and idleneſs, that ſtrikes every eye, which is ſo far from being ſubject to concealment, that the ſole end of it is to attract obſervation, inſomuch that it would be uſeleſs if concealed. Now, is there any cauſe to apprehend that this produce would be deemed arbitrary, becauſe it is founded on things not abſolutely neceſſary? They muſt know little of mankind, who ſuppoſe that thoſe who have once been ſeduced by luxury will ever relinquiſh it; they would infinitely rather relinquiſh neceſſaries; they would rather die of hunger than ſhame. The increaſe of expence would only be a new inducement to ſupport it, when the vanity of appearing rich would be gratified by paying the price of the article and the expence of the tax. Where there are opulent people, they will be

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ever ſollicitous to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the poor; and a revenue can never be formed more certain and leſs burthenſome than on this diſtinction.

For the ſame reaſon, induſtry would have nothing to fear from an œconomical plan that would enrich the revenue, animate agriculture, relieve the labourer, and inſenſibly approximate every fortune to that mediocrity in which alone the true ſtrength of a ſtate conſiſts. It may, perhaps, happen, that a tax ſhall contribute to make ſome particular faſhion of ſhorter duration than it would otherwiſe have been; but it will only give place to ſome other, by which the workman will be a gainer, and the revenue no loſer. In fine, ſuppoſing that government made it a conſtant rule to lay

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the taxes on the ſuperfluities of wealth, the conſequence would be, that, either, the rich would relinquiſh their ſuperfluous expences, and confine themſelves to thoſe which were only uſeful, which would tend to the advantage of the ſtate, as in that caſe the aſſeſſment of the taxes would produce the effect of the beſt ſumptuary laws; the expences of the ſtate would neceſſarily diminiſh with thoſe of individuals, and the revenue would not be decreaſed, becauſe it would have ſo much the leſs to expend; or, if the rich did not diminiſh their luxury, the revenue would have, in the produce of the taxes, the reſources it ſought, to provide for the real exigencies of the ſtate. In the firſt caſe, the exchequer would be the richer for having leſs to expend; in the ſecond, it would be

be enriched by the ſuperfluous expences of individuals.

It appears to me very certain, that whatever is not forbidden by the laws, nor prejudicial to the morals, which government can prevent, may as well be permitted, provided it be a right. If, for inſtance, government can forbid the uſe of carriages, it can much better levy a tax on them; an uſeful and judicious method of diſapproving the uſe of them without putting a ſtop to it. In that caſe, the tax might be conſidered as a ſort of penalty, the produce of which atones for the abuſe it puniſhes. Some people have ventured to affirm, that it is neceſſary to tax the peaſants, becauſe if they had nothing to pay they would not work; but experience evinces, in all parts of the world, the abſurdity of this max-

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im. It is in Holland and in England, where the labourers pay little, and above all in China, where they pay nothing, that the lands are beſt cultivated. On the contrary, in every place where the labourer is taxed in proportion to the produce of his land, he leaves it untilled, or only draws from it exactly ſo much as is neceſſary to his ſubſiſtence: for to thoſe who loſe the fruit of their labour it is an advantage to be idle; and laying a penalty on work is a ſingular method of baniſhing idleneſs.

It hath been ſaid, that nothing is ſo dangerous as making the purchaſer pay the tax; this, however, is done in China, the country of all others where the taxes are the heavieſt, and the beſt paid. Is it not evident that the evil is a thouſand times greater when

the labourer pays the tax himſelf? Is not this attacking the ſubſiſtence of the ſtate in its very ſource? Is it not endeavouring as much as poſſible to depopulate the country, and conſequently, in the end, to ruin it? For there cannot be a more fatal ſcarcity to a nation than the ſcarcity of men.

LUXURY.

LUXURY is an univerſal corrupter; it corrupts the rich, who enjoy it, and the poor, who covet it.

Like thoſe burning ſouth winds, which, covering the paſtures and herbage with noxious inſects, deprive ſerviceable animals of their ſubſiſtence, and convey deſtruction and death to every place where they are felt; luxury, in every ſtate, whether great or ſmall, to ſupport a parcel of lackeys and wretches whom it hath created, oppreſſes and undermines the labourer and the citizen. On pretence of ſupporting the poor, whom it ſhould not have made, it impoveriſhes every body elſe, and, ſooner or later, totally depopulates the ſtate.

In proportion as the ingenious and profitable arts increaſe and flouriſh, thoſe which are more neceſſary, as agriculture, will, in the end, become neglected: whence it ariſes, that the labourer, being held in no eſtimation, overwhelmed with taxes for the ſupport of luxury, and condemned to paſs his life between toil and famine, forſakes his fields, to ſeek in towns that bread he ought to carry there; the lands remain untilled; the highways are over-run with wretched citizens, become either beggars or robbers, and deſtined at length to conclude their miſery on a dunghill or a gibbet. This is the real effect that reſults from the progreſs of the ingenious arts and luxury. Theſe are the evident cauſes of all the miſery into which opulence plunges, in the end, the moſt admired nations.

nations. It is thus that the ſtate is enriched on the one ſide, and weakened and depopulated on the other; and that the moſt powerful monarchies, after infinite pains taken thus to enrich and enfeeble them, in the end become the prey of poorer nations, who yield to the fatal temptation of invading them.

Vanity and idleneſs, which engenders the ſciences, engenders luxury alſo: a taſte for luxury ever accompanies that of letters, as a taſte for letters very often accompanies that of luxury.

Luxury may be uſeful, perhaps, in giving bread to the poor; but, if there was no luxury, there would be no poor.

For one hundred poor that luxury ſupports in a town, it deſtroys an hun-

dred thouſand in the country. Money circulating in the hands only of rich men, and artiſts, to ſupply them with ſuperfluities, contributes no longer to the ſupport of the labourer, who has no coat to wear, preciſely becauſe others muſt have theirs laced. The waſte of thoſe articles, which were intended for the ſuſtenance of man, is of itſelf ſufficient to render luxury hateful to every humane heart. We muſt have gravy and fine ſauces in our kitchens; hence it is that ſo many ſick people are in want of broth. We muſt have fine wines at our table; hence the peaſant is obliged to drink water. We muſt wear powder; the conſequence of which is that the poor want bread.

If we conſulted only the moſt natural impreſſion, it would appear that taſte is more requiſite than moderation

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to make us deſpiſe pomp and luxury. Regularity and ſymmetry pleaſe every eye; the view of peace and happineſs gratifies every human heart, for it was formed to take delight in them: but an oſtentatious parade, which hath no relation either to order or happineſs, the only end of which is to attract the eye, what idea, favourable to him who diſplays it, can it excite in the mind of the ſpectator? An idea of his taſte? Does not taſte appear infinitely more in ſimple things than in thoſe which dazzle us by their ſplendor? The idea of convenience? Can any thing be more inconvenient than pomp? The idea of grandeur? Exactly the contrary. When I ſee a large houſe erecting, I immediately enquire why it was not larger. Why doth not he who keeps fifty ſervants retain an hundred? That

fine ſervice of ſilver, why is it not gold? He who gilds his carriage, why doth he not alſo gild his cielings? If his cielings be gilt, why is not the roof of his houſe? He who would erect an high tower, would do better to raiſe it to the clouds, otherwiſe his end is loſt; for the point where he ſtopped would but ſerve to ſhew more clearly his want of power. Oh man, man, vain-glorious and impotent, in diſplaying thy power thou evinceſt only thy weakneſs! On the contrary, an order of things, where no ſacrifice is made to opinion, where all is abſolutely uſeful, and confined to the real wants of nature, offers an object not only approved by our reaſon, but which gratifies the eyes and the heart: for theſe reaſons, that man conſiders himſelf only, in his moſt favourable circumſtances,

ſtances, as being ſufficient to himſelf, that his weakneſs doth not appear, and that this ſmiling picture doth not excite any uneaſy reflections. I defy any man of underſtanding and ſenſibility, to contemplate the palace of a monarch for an hour, and conſider the pomp diſplayed there, without falling into reflections of the moſt melancholy kind, and deploring the lot of his fellow creatures.

WEALTH AND THE WEALTHY.

THE rich always prefer money to merit. In the common exchange of money and ſervices they ever think the former infinitely overpays the latter; and though the whole life of a perſon whom they ſupported were devoted to their ſervice, they would ſtill be of opinion that the return was too ſmall.

Thoſe who ſeek wealth are formed to ſerve; thoſe who deſpiſe it, to command. It is not the power of gold that ſubjects the poor to the rich, but the deſire they have to become rich alſo, otherwiſe they would neceſſarily have the dominion.

The poor groan under the yoke of the

the rich, the rich under the yoke of their prejudices.

"It is not the poſſeſſion of riches that make a man rich," * ſays the author of a romance. The wealth of a man doth not conſiſt in its extent, but in the uſe he makes of it; for, according to our method of employing them, is the advantage we derive from our poſſeſſions, and riches are much eaſier exhauſted than the means of diſſipating them; which is the cauſe that the enjoyment of wealth is not in proportion to the expenditure, but according to the judgment with which the expence is regulated. A profuſe fool may throw an ingot of gold into the ſea, and ſay he is gratified by it; but what compariſon can there be between this

* The romance of the Roſe.

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extravagant gratification and that which a ſenſible man would derive from the appropriation of a much ſmaller ſum.

There is no ſuch thing as poſitive wealth: the word only ſignifies a connection of ſuperfluity between the deſires and the faculties of a rich man. One man may be rich with an acre of land, while another is poor amidſt heaps of gold. Extravagance and caprice have no bounds; they create more poverty than is occaſioned by real neceſſities.

Whoever enjoys health, and doth not want the neceſſaries of life, let them but baniſh imaginary wants from their mind, and they will feel themſelves rich enough: this is the *aurea mediocritas* of Horace.

BEGGARS.

"TO relieve beggars, is to contribute to the increaſe of thoſe wretches and vagabonds who prefer that lazy occupation, and are a burthen to the ſociety which they ought to aſſiſt by their labours." Theſe are the maxims with which ſome abſurd reaſoners take pains to flatter and encourage the inhumanity of the rich.

We not only permit, but encourage, at a great expence, an immenſe number of uſeleſs profeſſions, many of which ſerve only to corrupt and ſpoil the morals. If we conſider the ſtate of a beggar even as a trade, far from having any thing of that kind to fear, we ſhall find it the means of encouraging thoſe ſentiments of concern and

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humanity which ought to unite all mankind. To conſider it on account of the talents it requires, why ſhould I not requite the beggar, who excites my ſenſibility, and engages me thereby to relieve him, as well as pay the player, who occaſions my ſhedding a few fruitleſs tears? If the one makes me love the good actions of others, the other engages me to perform them myſelf. All that we feel at a tragedy is forgotten when the repreſentation ceaſes; but the remembrance of having conſoled the unhappy affords us endleſs ſatisfaction. If the number of beggars is burthenſome to the ſtate, of how many other profeſſions, which are tolerated and encouraged, may not the ſame be ſaid? It is the province of the monarch to prevent there being any beggars; but, to check the profeſſion,

is it neceſſary to render the people unnatural and cruel? For my part, without knowing what the poor are in reſpect to the ſtate, I know that they are my brethren, and that I cannot refuſe them the ſmall pittance they aſk without being guilty of the moſt unpardonable inhumanity. I allow that the greater part of them may be vagabonds; but I know the misfortunes we are all ſubject to too well, to be ignorant of the various means by which an honeſt and good man may be reduced to that condition; and how can I be ſure that the unknown object who implores me in the name of the Almighty to aſſiſt him, and begs for a morſel of bread, is not that honeſt but unfortunate being who is periſhing for hunger, and whom my refuſal may drive to deſpair? Though the alms

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we give ſhould not be a real aſſiſtance, it is at leaſt a proof that we commiſerate their ſituation; it ſoftens the hardſhip of refuſal, and is a ſort of ſalutation to them. A bit of bread, or a ſmall piece of money, are almoſt as eaſily beſtowed, and are certainly a more benevolent ſupply than a mere "*God help you*," as if the gifts of the Almighty were not in the hands of man, or they had other granaries on earth than the ſtorehouſes of the rich. Finally, whatever we may think of thoſe unfortunate beings, if we owe no regard to the wretches who beg, at leaſt we owe it to ourſelves to reſpect the ſufferings of human nature, or the appearance of them, and not to harden our hearts at the ſight of the miſery to which it is ſubject.

"To ſupport beggars," ſay theſe cenſurers

ſurers of alms, " is to form a nurſery for thieves ;" but, on the contrary, 'tis preventing their becoming ſuch. I allow that the poor ought not to be encouraged to beg but when they are obliged to do it; they ſhould be relieved leſt they ſhould become thieves. Nothing engages a man to change his profeſſion ſo much as not being able to ſupport himſelf in it. Now all thoſe who have once engaged in this idle profeſſion, imbibe ſuch an averſion to work, that they would rather rob and be hanged than again have recourſe to labour. A farthing is eaſily aſked and refuſed, but twenty farthings would provide a ſupper for a poor creature whom twenty refuſals might render deſperate. Who would refuſe ſo ſmall an alms, if they conſidered that by granting it they might ſave two people, one from a

crime, the other from death? I have ſomewhere read that beggars are a ſpecies of vermin who attach themſelves to the rich: it is natural for children to attach themſelves to their parents, but theſe rich and hard-hearted parents diſown and leave to the poor the care of providing for them.

SUICIDE.

YOU would ceaſe to exiſt, but can you prove that you have yet begun? Were you placed in the world to do nothing? In giving you life, did not your Creator appoint you a taſk to fulfil in it? If you have performed that taſk before the evening, you may certainly repoſe for the remainder of the day; but this muſt be firſt examined. What reply will you have prepared to give the Supreme Judge when he ſhall demand an account of your time? Miſtaken wretch! ſhew me that juſt and righteous man who boaſts he has lived long enough, that I may learn from him how I ſhould have conducted myſelf to obtain the right of diſpoſing of my life.

You reckon up the ills of life, and decide that exiſtence is an evil : but examine the univerſal order of things ; obſerve if there is any good unmixed with evil. Can it be ſaid, therefore, that there is no good in the world ? And can you confound what is naturally evil with what is ſubject to evil only by accident ? The paſſive exiſtence of man is nothing ; it regards only a body from which he will ſoon be freed ; but his active and moral exiſtence, which ſhould influence his whole life, conſiſts in the exerciſe of his will. Life is an evil to the man who is wicked and proſperous, and an advantage to him who is juſt and unfortunate ; for it is not a tranſient modification, but its relation to its object that renders it good or evil.

You are tired of life, and you ſay

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life is an evil. Sooner or later you will be conſoled; you will then pronounce life to be an advantage; you will be more in the right without having reaſoned better, becauſe nothing has changed but yourſelf. Alter, therefore, your conduct from henceforth, and, ſince the evil lies in the wrong bias of your own mind, correct your unruly paſſions, and do not burn your houſe to ſave yourſelf the trouble of regulating it.

What are ten, twenty, or thirty years, to an immortal being? Good and evil flee like a ſhadow: life ſlides away in an inſtant, it is nothing of itſelf, its value depends on the uſe we make of it; the good that we have done alone remains, and makes it valuable. Say, therefore, no more that life is an evil, ſince it entirely depends

on you to render it a benefit; and your conſidering your having lived as a misfortune, is a ſtrong reaſon for your living longer. Repeat, therefore, no more that you have permiſſion to die; for you might as well ſay you are allowed to relinquiſh your ſtation as a man, that you are permitted to revolt againſt the author of your being, and to elude your deſtiny.

Suicide is a clandeſtine and ignominious death. It is a theft committed againſt human nature; ere you quit it reſtore what it has beſtowed on you. "But I am of no uſe in ſociety; my life can be of no advantage to the world." Short-ſighted reaſon! Can you be ignorant that it is impoſſible for you to ſtir a ſtep without finding ſome duty to fulfil; and that every man is of ſome

ſome ſervice in the creation, even by the very circumſtance of his exiſtence?

Raſh man! if there yet remains one ſentiment of virtue at the bottom of your heart, learn from me how to render life valuable whenever you feel an inclination to quit it. Say to yourſelf, *Let me perform one good action yet before I die:* then ſeek ſome indigent perſon to relieve, ſome unhappy being to conſole, or ſome oppreſſed man to defend. If this conſideration has due effect to-day, it will to-morrow, the next day, and to the end of your life. If it hath not, die, for you are incorrigible.

DUELLING.

BEWARE of confounding the ſacred name of honour with that barbarous prejudice which places all virtue at the point of a ſword, and is only calculated to produce courageous villainy.

In what does this prejudice conſiſt? In the moſt extravagant and ſavage opinion that ever entered the human mind, viz. That all the ſocial duties are ſupplied by bravery; that a man is no longer knave, cheat, or ſlanderer, but is courteous, obliging, and affable, if he will fight; that lies become truth, theft lawful, treachery politeneſs, and falſehood praiſe-worthy, ſo long as we can ſupport this doctrine ſword in hand; that an affront is always amply repaid by a wound, and that we can never

never be in the wrong with any man, provided we kill him. There is, I confeſs, another ſort of affair where politeneſs is mingled with cruelty, where they kill people by accident only; that wherein they fight in cold blood. In cold blood! Gracious God! and what wouldſt thou do with that blood, ſavage monſter! wouldſt thou drink it? Did the moſt valiant heroes of former ages ever think of revenging their private injuries by ſingle combat? Did Cæſar ſend a challenge to Cato, or Pompey to Cæſar, on account of all the affronts they mutually received? And was the greateſt Greek captain diſhonoured for allowing himſelf to be threatened with a cane? Different times, different manners, I allow; but can there be other than what are right, and will it bear an enquiry, whether the

manners

manners of the times are thoſe which are conſonant to true honour? No: that honour is unchangeable, it depends not on prejudices; it is neither ſubject to faſhion or opinion, but has its eternal ſource in the heart of the juſt man, and in the unchangeable regulation of his duties. If duelling was not practiſed among the moſt enlightened, brave, and virtuous people on earth, I affirm that it is not an inſtitution requiſite to the ſupport of true honour, but a barbarous and horrid cuſtom, worthy of its ſavage origin. It remains to enquire, whether, when his own life, or that of another, is concerned, a good man regulates his conduct by cuſtom, if there is not more real courage in braving than adopting it on ſuch an occaſion? How would a man act who

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ſubjected himſelf to it in a country where the cuſtoms were exactly contrary? At Meſſina, or in Naples, he would lie in wait for his enemy at the corner of a ſtreet, and, when his back was turned, run him through the body. This is eſteemed bravery in that country; honour doth not conſiſt there in allowing yourſelf to be killed by your enemy, but in your killing him.

The juſt man, whoſe whole life is unſpotted, and whoſe conduct is void of reproach, would refuſe to ſully his hands by an homicide, and would become more reſpectable for the refuſal. Ever ready to ſerve his country, to protect the weak, to fulfil the moſt hazardous duties, and to defend what is dear to him, on every juſt and honourable occaſion, at the expence of his blood, his conduct is marked by that

firmneſs

firmneſs and reſolution which only accompanies true courage. Secure in the unerring evidence of his own conſcience, he walks fearleſs on his way, and neither ſeeks nor avoids his enemy. It is obvious that he conſiders death a leſs evil than doing ill, and that he dreads the crime, not the danger. If contemptible prejudices riſe up againſt him for an inſtant, every hour of his reſpectable life are ſo many witneſſes to oppoſe them; and, in a conduct ſo conſiſtent, one action is judged of by all the others.

The men who are ſo jealous of affronts, and ſo ready to provoke others, are generally thoſe contemptible beings who, apprehending that others dare not openly avow the deſpicable opinion they have of them, attempt to cover, by ſome affair of honour, the infamy of

all

all the reſt of their conduct. Such men make an effort, and ſhew themſelves once to be entitled to the privilege of concealment for the reſt of their lives. True courage is more ſteady and leſs officious; it is always what it ought to be; it neither requires to be excited or reſtrained; it is ever preſent to the good man; it attends him in the field againſt an enemy; in company, when it is neceſſary to defend the cauſe of the abſent, or that of truth; and in his bed, when attacked by diſeaſe or death. The ſtrength of mind which inſpires it is preſent on all occaſions; it makes virtue ſuperior to every event, and conſiſts, not in fighting, but in being devoid of fear.

DRUNKENNESS.

EVERY kind of intemperance is vicious, but that is the moſt ſo which deprives us of our nobleſt faculty. Drunkenneſs degrades a man, deprives him, at leaſt for a time, of his reaſon, and finiſhes by making a brute of him. But a propenſity to drinking is not, however, criminal; it ſeldom incites to the commiſſion of ill. It rather makes men ſtupid than wicked; for one tranſient quarrel that it occaſions, it produces an hundred laſting attachments. Men who are fond of their bottle, are, in general, poſſeſſed of frankneſs and cordiality. There are few of them who are not open, kind, juſt, faithful, brave, and goodnatured almoſt to a fault.

How

How often do apparent virtues conceal real vices! The wiſe man is ſober from temperance; the knave is ſo from deception. In thoſe countries where the morals are bad, where intrigues, treaſon, and adultery prevail, people dread a ſtate of indiſcretion, in which the heart develops itſelf without their being aware of it. In all places whatever, the people who hold drunkenneſs in the greateſt abhorrence, are always thoſe who have the moſt intereſt in avoiding it. In Swiſſerland it is almoſt held in eſteem; at Naples it is regarded with horror: but which is in reality moſt to be feared, the intemperance of the Swiſs, or the reſerve of the Italians?

Let us not aſperſe even vice itſelf; is it not reproachful enough without? Wine does not create wickedneſs; it only

only diſplays it. He who killed Clytus in a drunken fit, cauſed Philotas to be put to death in cold blood. If drunkenneſs hath its phrenzy, what paſſion is without it? The difference between them is, that the others remain concealed in our hearts, and that is kindled and expires in an inſtant. With the exception of that tranſport, which quickly ceaſes, and is eaſily evaded, it is certain, that whoever is guilty of a crime when drunk, conceals evil intentions when ſober.

DISEASES.

THE extreme inequality in the manner of living among the different ranks of people, the exceſſive idleneſs of the one, and the inceſſant labour of the other; the facility of exciting and gratifying our appetites, the delicate and luxurious food prepared for the rich, thoſe high ſauces which heat the blood and produce indigeſtion; the poor ſuſtenance of the lower order of people, and their want ſometimes even of that, which want incites them to greedily overload their ſtomachs when an opportunity offers; privation of reſt, exceſſes of all kind, the immoderate exerciſe of the paſſions, fatigue, waſte of ſpirits, the numberleſs afflictions and troubles, incident to every ſtation, which

prey perpetually on the heart; theſe are the fatal proofs that the greater part of our ills are of our own creation, and that we ſhould have avoided them almoſt all, if we had lived according to that ſimple, regular, and retired plan which nature dictated. If ſhe ordained that we ſhould be healthy, I dare almoſt affirm that a ſtate of reflection is inconſiſtent with a ſtate of nature, and that a contemplative man is a degenerated being.

Our moral evils all depend on opinion, excepting one, which is ſin, and that depends on ourſelves: our phyſical evils are deſtroyed, or deſtroy us. Time and death are our remedies; but we ſuffer the more from our impatience of ſuffering, and cauſe ourſelves greater pain by endeavouring to cure our diſeaſes, than we ſhould have in ſupporting them.

PHYSIC AND PHYSICIANS.

WEAKNESS of body produces weakneſs of mind: hence the dominion of phyſic, an art more pernicious to men than all the ills it pretends to cure. I know not, for my own part, of what diſorders phyſicians cure us; but I know they give us thoſe which are very fatal; mental debility, cowardice, credulity, and the fear of death. If they cure the diſorder, they deſtroy the courage. Of what uſe is it their giving motion to a few phantoms—'tis men we want, and ſuch never come out of their hands.

Phyſic is in faſhion among us, and with reaſon; it is an amuſement for thoſe indolent people who, not knowing what to do with their time, waſte

it in the preſervation of themſelves. If immortality had unfortunately been their deſtiny, they would have conſidered themſelves the moſt wretched of beings. A life they were not afraid of loſing, would have no value for them. Such people require phyſicians, who, to flatter, muſt threaten them, who muſt daily give them the only pleaſure they are ſuſceptible of, that of being not dead.

Men make uſe of the ſame ſophiſtry in reſpect to phyſic that they do in relation to their enquiries after truth. They always ſuppoſe undertaking the caſe is curing it, as that ſeeking the truth is finding it. They do not recollect that they ought to balance the advantage of one cure a phyſician performs by the death of an hundred patients whom he has killed, and the

benefit

benefit of one truth which is diſcovered by the injury thoſe errors produce which have birth at the ſame time. The ſciences which inſtruct, and the medicines which cure, are undoubtedly beneficial; but the ſciences which miſlead, and the medicines which deſtroy, are as certainly prejudicial. We ſhould learn, therefore, to diſtinguiſh them: this is the point. If we could be content to remain ignorant of the truth, we ſhould never be miſled by falſehood: if we could reſolve not to ſeek a cure in oppoſition to nature, we ſhould never be deſtroyed by the hand of a phyſician. Theſe privations would be judicious; we ſhould be gainers evidently by ſubmitting to them. I do not deny that medicine may be of uſe to individuals, but I affirm that it is prejudicial to the hu-

man race in general. In reply to this it will be ſaid, as is perpetually argued, that the fault lies in the phyſician, for that the medicine itſelf is infallible. Perhaps ſo: but then it ſhould preſent itſelf without the phyſician; for ſo long as they go together, there is a thouſand times more to be feared from the errors of the artiſt, than to hope from the aſſiſtance of the art.

This deceitful art, adapted rather to the mind than the body, is not more ſerviceable to one than another; it contributes leſs to cure us of our ills than to impreſs us with a fear of them; ſerves leſs to retard death than to anticipate the thoughts of it: it conſumes our exiſtence, inſtead of prolonging it; and even if it were to prolong life, it would ſtill be to the prejudice of the ſpecies, ſince the attentions it required

would

would render us uſeleſs to ſociety, and the fears it created would interrupt the performance of our duties. It is the knowledge of dangers that makes us fear them; he who thought himſelf invulnerable would have no fears. The poet, who armed Achilles againſt dangers, deprived him of the merit of courage; any other perſon would have been an Achilles on the ſame terms.

Would you find men of true courage, ſeek them in thoſe places where there are no phyſicians, where the conſequences of diſorders are unknown, and where death is ſcarcely thought of. Man naturally ſuffers patiently, and dies tranquilly; it is the preſcription of the phyſician, the precept of the philoſopher, and the exhortation of the prieſt, which debaſes the mind, and inſpires the fear of death.

Labour and temperance are the two real phyſicians of man; labour ſharpens the appetite, and temperance prevents his abuſing it.

If from general obſervation we find that the uſe of medicine does not contribute to improve the health, or prolong the life of man, from the very circumſtance of its not being beneficial, it is injurious, ſince it waſtes time, and employs men and things to an entire loſs. A man, who lives ten years without a phyſician, lives longer to himſelf and ſociety than he who exiſts thirty years their victim.

Live then according to the dictates of nature; be patient, and baniſh phyſicians. You will not avoid death, but you will feel it only once; whereas they preſent it daily to your diſturbed imagination, and their deceitful art, inſtead

inſtead of prolonging your days, robs you of their enjoyment. Of what real ſervice, is the queſtion, has their art been to man? Some of thoſe whom they have cured would have died, it is true; but millions of thoſe whom they have killed would have been alive. Ye who are wiſe, put not into this lottery, where ſo many chances are againſt you. Suffer, die, or recover; but *live* to your laſt hour.

LIFE.

LIFE does not conſiſt in merely breathing; it is in acting, in making uſe of our organs, our ſenſes, our faculties, of all that belongs to us, that we give proof of our exiſtence.

The longeſt liver is not he who has breathed the greateſt number of years, but he who has made the beſt uſe of the term of his exiſtence. Some men, who have lived to the age of an hundred, may be ſaid to have died at their birth.

Eraſmus ſays there are few people who would live over again on the ſame conditions that they have held their exiſtence: but thoſe muſt put a very high price on their merchandize, who would abate a great deal if they had any

any hope of concluding their bargain. Beſides, who are the people that ſay this? The rich, perhaps, who, cloyed with falſe pleaſures, and ignorant of true enjoyment, are tired of life, yet tremble at the thoughts of loſing it. Perhaps men of letters, who, being the moſt ſedentary, unhealthy, and contemplative, are conſequently the moſt unhappy of all human beings. Would you find men of the beſt temperature, or at leaſt thoſe who are generally moſt ingenuous, and who, as they form the larger part, ought to be conſulted; ſeek the honeſt citizen, who has paſſed his life in peace and obſcurity, free from projects or ambition; the good mechanic, who lives comfortably by his trade; or even the peaſant, not of France, where it is ſaid they are ſtarved to death that we may live,

but

but of a free country. The difference that we find leads me to believe that it is the abuſe of our exiſtence which renders it burthenſome to us; and I have infinitely leſs eſteem for him who regrets his having lived, than for him who can ſay with Cato, "I am not ſorry that I have exiſted, ſince I have lived in ſuch a manner as aſſures me I was not created in vain." This, however, does not preclude wiſe men from quitting the ſtage gracefully, without murmur or deſpair when nature or fortune brings the unqueſtionable mandate for their departure.

DEATH.

IF we were immortal, we ſhould conſider ourſelves as moſt miſerable beings. It is hard to die, but it is pleaſing to hope that our preſent exiſtence is not eternal, that a better life will repay us for the ſufferings of this. The certainty of death is, to the wiſe man, the motive of ſupporting the miſeries of life; if he were not ſatisfied that he ſhould loſe it, he would regret the care employed in its preſervation.

It is ſaid that man has an ardent propenſity towards ſelf-preſervation. It is true; but it ſhould be obſerved at the ſame time, that this propenſity is, in a great meaſure, the work of man. Naturally we concern ourſelves no further for our preſervation than according to the

power

power given us; when that eludes us, we become reconciled to it, and die without tormenting ourſelves fruitleſsly to preſerve life. The firſt law of reſignation is drawn from nature. The ſavages, as the brutes, ſtruggle very little with death; they ſuffer it almoſt without a complaint. This law deſtroyed, another ſupplies its place that is drawn from reaſon; but few are governed by it, and this coined reſignation is never ſo full and complete as the firſt.

The grand error conſiſts in our making life of too great importance, as if our exiſtence depended on it, that after death we ſhould ceaſe to be. Our life is nothing in the eye of the Almighty, it is nothing in the eye of reaſon, it ought to be nothing in our own; for, when the ſoul quits the body,

body, we only get rid of an incommodious habit.

There are circumſtances which often ſtrike us more or leſs, according to the point of view in which we conſider them; and which, if we examine them cloſely, loſe much of the horror they inſpire at firſt ſight. Nature confirms me daily in the opinion, that an accelerated death is not always a real evil, that it may ſometimes even prove a relative good. Of ſo many men who are cruſhed beneath the ruins of Liſbon, many, doubtleſs, have avoided greater evils; and, though the deſcription of ſuch a circumſtance is very affecting, it is by no means certain, that any one of theſe unfortunate beings ſuffered more than they would have done, if, according to the ordinary courſe of things, they had waited, in a lingering

lingering ſtate of pain and anguiſh, the death which was thus anticipated. Is it a more melancholy end than that of the dying man, whom they overwhelm with officious and uſeleſs cares, whom his attorney and heirs will not ſuffer to breathe, whom his phyſicians aſſaſſinate? For my own part, I perceive univerſally, that the ills to which nature ſubjects us are infinitely leſs cruel than thoſe we ourſelves occaſion.

To live in freedom, and not be too much attached to the things of this world, is the beſt method of learning to die.

STUDY.

WHEN once the underſtanding is opened to the habit of reflection, it is always better that we ſhould diſcover of ourſelves thoſe things which are diſcloſed to us by books. This is the true method of moulding them to the capacity, of adopting them.

The great error of thoſe who ſtudy is, that they depend too much on books, and draw too little from their own fund, not conſidering, that, of all ſophiſts, our own reaſon is that which the ſeldomeſt deceives us. As ſoon as we conſult our underſtanding, each feels what is right, each diſcerns what is beautiful. We do not require to be inſtructed reſpecting the one or the other; and we cannot be impoſed on

in thoſe points, if we do not wiſh for impoſition. But the models of perfection, in what is right or beautiful, are uncommon, and ſeldom acknowledged; we muſt go in ſearch of them at a diſtance. Vanity, meaſuring the powers of nature by our own weakneſs, leads us to regard thoſe qualities as chimerical which we do not find in ourſelves. Idleneſs and vice rely on this pretended impoſſibility, and the weak man allows himſelf to ſuppoſe that what is not ſeen every day is never ſeen. It is this error which ſhould be deſtroyed. We ſhould accuſtom ourſelves to admit and contemplate thoſe great objects, in order to baniſh every pretext for not imitating them. The ſoul is elevated, the heart animated, by the contemplation of theſe divine models; from conſidering we ſeek to reſemble

ſemble them, and from thence conceive a diſguſt to every thing ordinary.

The mind will not, any more than the body, bear more than it is formed to ſuſtain. When the underſtanding adopts any thing before it is depoſited in the memory, what is drawn from it is then our own; inſtead of which, in overloading the memory, unknown to us, we run the riſk of never drawing from the underſtanding any thing that is properly ours.

STUDY OF THE WORLD.

THE ſtudy of the world is a very difficult matter; it is difficult to find the ſtation from which we can beſt examine it. Philoſophers are at too great a diſtance, the men of the world too near; the one ſees too much to be able to reflect; the other, too little to judge of the complete picture. The philoſopher examines every object that ſtrikes him ſeparately, and, not perceiving the relation and connection of other objects which are out of his reach, with it, he never conſiders it in its true point of view, and ſees therefore neither the cauſe nor the real effect. The man of the world ſees every thing, and has not time to think of any thing. The perpetual ſucceſ-

ſion

ſion and change of objects admits of his merely ſeeing, not obſerving them; they mutually and rapidly efface each other, till nothing remains of all but a confuſed aſſemblage of impreſſions that reſemble chaos.

Neither is it in our power to ſee and reflect alternately, becauſe the objects we examine require a conſtant obſervation, which interrupts reflection. The man who ſhould attempt to divide his time, by intervals, between ſolitude and ſociety, would be always agitated in retirement, and a ſtranger in the world; conſequently, would not be at his eaſe any where. There can be no other method adopted than that of dividing the term of our exiſtence into two diſtinct ſpaces, the one to ſee objects, the other to reflect on them; and even that is almoſt impoſſible, ſince

our reaſon is not ſo entirely in our power, that we can lay it aſide, and reſume it at our pleaſure; and whoever can live ten years without reflection, will never reflect during his whole life. It is alſo abſurd to attempt to ſtudy the world as a ſimple ſpectator. Thoſe who affect only to obſerve, obſerve nothing, becauſe, as they are of no uſe in buſineſs, and troubleſome in parties of pleaſure, they are refuſed admittance every where. We can ſee the actions of others only while we ourſelves are acting with them. In the great ſchool of the world, we muſt, to obtain knowledge, begin by practiſing what we would learn.

STUDY OF THE SCIENCES.

AMONG ſo many admirable methods of abridging the ſtudy of the ſciences, we are in great want of one which ſhould teach them with ſucceſs.

The abuſe of books is the deſtruction of knowledge. From a ſuppoſition that we know what we have read, we think ourſelves diſpenſed from learning it. Too much reading tends only to make the ignorant preſumptuous. Books teach people to talk of what they do not underſtand.

There is no real progreſs in the reaſon of man, for all that is gained on one hand is loſt on the other. The underſtanding of all proceeds from the ſame point: hence, by devoting to the diſcovery of what others have thought,

that time we ſhould employ in learning to think ourſelves, we have more acquired lights, and leſs ſtrength of underſtanding. Our underſtanding, like our arms, from being accuſtomed to the uſe of tools, can do nothing without them. The more ingenious the tools, the more dull and awkward do our organs become: by dint of collecting foreign aids, we no longer receive any from ourſelves.

THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

THE mind has its neceſſities as well as the body: theſe form the baſis of ſociety, thoſe the pleaſures of it.

The arts, ſciences, and letters, leſs deſpotic, but more powerful, perhaps, than the laws and government, conceal, by entwining garlands of flowers around them, thoſe heavy chains with which men are laden, ſtifles in them the ſentiment of that original liberty for which they ſeem born, makes them love their ſlavery, and forms what is denominated a civilized people. Neceſſity raiſed thrones, the arts and ſciences have eſtabliſhed them. Ye ſovereigns of the earth, encourage talents, protect and reward thoſe who cultivate them! Ye civilized people, cultivate them: happy

happy ſlaves! to them ye owe that refined and delicate taſte on which ye pique yourſelves, that ſoftneſs of manners which connects and renders your intercourſe ſo eaſy; in ſhort, which gives the appearance of every virtue, without the poſſeſſion of one.

In proportion as the interior becomes corrupted, the exterior aſſumes a gloſs: 'tis thus that the cultivation of letters inſenſibly engenders politeneſs.

What dangers, what miſtakes are we liable to in the inveſtigation of the ſciences! What numberleſs errors muſt we fall into, a thouſand times more dangerous than the truth is uſeful, ere we diſcover it! The diſadvantage is evident, becauſe falſehood has many paths, truth only one.

A taſte for the fine arts and literature

ture annihilates the love of our firſt duties and of true glory. When once we pay to talents the tribute of thoſe honours which are due only to virtue, every man becomes ſollicitous to be thought agreeable, and indifferent to his principles and morals: thence alſo is derived this conſequence, that only thoſe qualities are recompenſed in men which depend not on themſelves; for our talents are born with us, our virtues only are our own.

A taſte for philoſophy looſens all the bands of eſteem and benevolence that attach men to ſociety; and this is, perhaps, one of the greateſt ills it gives birth to. The love of ſtudy ſoon renders every other attachment inſipid; and, further, in conſequence of reflecting on human nature, of obſerving mankind, the philoſopher learns to appreciate

preciate them according to their value, and it is not eaſy to love what we deſpiſe: he ſoon, therefore, concentres in himſelf all that intereſt which good men ſhare with their fellow creatures; his contempt for others gratifies his pride; his ſelf-love augments in the ſame proportion as his indifference for others; his family, his country, become mere words void of meaning; he is neither a parent, citizen, or man; he is a philoſopher.

At the ſame time that the cultivation of the ſciences detaches the affections of the philoſopher in ſome meaſure from ſociety, it attaches, in another ſenſe, men of letters to it, and both with an equal prejudice to virtue. Every man that cultivates agreeable talents, is ſollicitous to pleaſe, to be admired, and that more than any other perſon.

perſon. The public applauſe he thinks due to him alone: I ſhould ſay his whole time was devoted to the obtaining it, if he was not even more aſſiduous to deprive his competitors of their ſhare. Thence ariſe, on the one hand, refinements in taſte and politeneſs, mean and baſe flattery, trifling, inſidious, and ſeducing attentions, which at length contract the mind and corrupt the heart; on the other, jealouſy, rivalry, the hatred ſo conſpicuous among artiſts, perfidy, ſlander, treachery, knavery, and, in ſhort, all that is produced by the moſt odious and ſhameful vices. If the philoſophers deſpiſe their fellow-creatures, the artiſts ſoon render themſelves deſpicable; and thus both concur in the end to bring mankind into contempt.

MEN OF LEARNING.

THE generality of learned men are ſo in the manner of children. Extenſive knowledge is leſs the reſult of a multiplicity of ideas, than of a number of images, dates, names, and places. All objects that have no relation but to themſelves, or are unconnected with ideas, are retained ſolely by the remembrance of ſigns; and we ſeldom recollect any one of theſe things, without recalling, at the ſame time, the *recto* or the *verſo* of the page in which it was written, or the figure under which we firſt ſaw it. This was nearly the knowledge in requeſt in former ages; that of our times is different: they no longer ſtudy, no longer obſerve; they dream, and gravely pronounce that

that to be philoſophy, which is merely the effect of a reſtleſs night. It will, perhaps, be ſaid that I myſelf dream. I acknowledge it: but I do what they carefully avoid; I give my dreams as dreams, leaving to my readers to diſcover if they contain any thing that may be uſeful to thoſe who are awake.

If it is proper that men of genius ſhould inſtruct mankind, people of inferior capacity ſhould receive thoſe inſtructions. If all pretended to teach, who would learn? "*Thoſe who are defective in their limbs,*" ſays Montaigne, "*are incompetent to bodily exerciſes; and thoſe who are defective in underſtanding, to the exerciſes of the mind.*" But in this learned age, we perpetually ſee the lame pretending to teach others to walk. People read now to criticiſe, not to receive inſtruction.

Know-

Knowledge, among the greater part of thoſe who acquire it, is a coin on which they ſet a great value, but which, however, contributes no further to their ſatisfaction than while they can communicate it, and is only uſeful in commerce. Take from our men of learning the pleaſure of being heard, and knowledge would no longer have any charms for them: they only collect it in their cloſets to diſplay it in public: they deſire wiſdom only as it makes them ſhine in the opinion of the world; and would no longer ſtudy, if they were no longer admired. It is thus that even Seneca himſelf thought: "If," ſaid he, "*knowledge were given to me on the condition of not diſplaying it, I ſhould reject it.*" Sublime philoſophy, this is thy uſe!

When I ſee a man, inflamed by a love

love of the ſciences, allow himſelf to be ſeduced by their charms, and running from one to the other, without knowing where to ſtop, it reminds me of a child amuſing itſelf in collecting ſhells by the river ſide: it firſt loads itſelf with thoſe which pleaſe it moſt; then, tempted by others which appear ſtill more charming, it rejects, then retakes, till at length, overburthened with their numbers, and uncertain which to chuſe, it throws them all away, and returns empty-handed.

Thoſe great philoſophers, ſo eminent for their knowledge, would be very much ſurpriſed to be told they knew nothing; but I ſhould myſelf be much more ſurpriſed, if thoſe men, whoſe knowledge is ſo extenſive, ſhould ever know that.

TALENTS.

NATURE ſeems to have diſtributed various talents among men, that each may have their employment without regarding the ſituation in which they were born.

There are two things to be conſidered before talents; morality and happineſs. Man is a being too noble to ſerve merely as an inſtrument for others, and ſhould not be employed in what is convenient to others, without conſulting, at the ſame time, what is ſuitable to himſelf, becauſe men were not made for places, but places for men; and to diſtribute things properly, we muſt not ſo much ſeek in their appropriation the employment for which each man is calculated, as that which is beſt calculated

lated for him, to contribute, as far as poſſible, to the rendering him virtuous and happy. It is never allowable to hurt one human being for the advantage of others, nor to make one ſcoundrel for the ſervice of honeſt people.

To cultivate our talents, it is neceſſary we ſhould know them; but is it ſo eaſy a thing to diſcover a man's talents? And if, at the age when we take our bias, there is ſo much difficulty in diſcovering thoſe of a child, whom we have carefully obſerved, how ſhall he, whoſe education has been neglected, find out his; will he be able of himſelf to diſtinguiſh them? Nothing is more equivocal than the proof of inclination we give in our youth. A propenſity to imitate has frequently a greater ſhare than talents: it depends more on a caſual event, that calls forth the genius,

than a decided inclination; and even the inclination itſelf does not always announce the diſpoſition.

If each were acquainted with his talent, and inclined to cultivate it, how many would have the means? How many overcome the difficulties placed by injuſtice in their way? How many vanquiſh unworthy competitors? Thoſe who feel their weakneſs, call intrigue and faction to their aid, which others, confident in their powers, ſcorn to make uſe of.

Too many eſtabliſhments in favour of the arts is a detriment to them; for, by injudiciouſly multiplying the ſubjects, they are confounded. True merit remains undiſtinguiſhed in the croud, and the honours due to the moſt ingenious are beſtowed ſolely on the moſt intriguing.

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If a ſociety could be formed, wherein the employments and ſtations were exactly adapted to the talents and perſonal merit, each might aſpire to the place for which he was the beſt calculated; but it is neceſſary to be guided by more certain rules, and renounce the reward of talents, when the moſt contemptible of all is the only one which leads to fortune.

When a people preſerve their natural ſimplicity and goodneſs, they do not require ſo many talents: they are better ſupported by their ſimplicity, than the others by their induſtry. But, in proportion as they become corrupted, their talents unfold as if intended for a ſupplement to the virtues they loſe, and to oblige even the wicked to be uſeful in ſpite of themſelves.

TASTE.

VIRTUE is only the beautiful brought in action; the one is intimately connected with the other, and each have their common ſource in well-regulated nature. It follows hence, that taſte and wiſdom are perfected by the ſame means, and that a heart, which is truly affected by the charms of virtue, ſhould be ſenſible, in the ſame degree, to all the different ſpecies of beauty.

Our ſight is exerciſed in the ſame manner as our feeling; or, rather, an accurate ſight is only a correct and delicate ſentiment. It is hence that a painter, in viewing a beautiful landſcape, or fine picture, is tranſported with objects which are unnoticed by the

the eye of a common obſerver. How many things are there which are only perceptible through ſentiment, and for which it is impoſſible to account; how many of thoſe indeſcribable objects, which occur ſo often, and of which taſte alone can decide!

Taſte is in ſome ſort the microſcope of the judgment; it is that which brings ſmall objects within its reach; the operations of taſte guide the deciſions of judgment. What is requiſite, therefore, to cultivate it? To exerciſe our ſight as our feeling; to judge of the beautiful by inſpection, as of the ſight by ſentiment.

Taſte is natural to all men; but all do not poſſeſs it in the ſame proportion, nor does it unfold itſelf in all in the ſame degree; it is alſo ſubject to alter in all from different cauſes. The

proportion of taſte which we may poſſeſs depends on the degree of ſenſibility allotted us, its form and cultivation on the ſocieties in which we have lived. In the firſt place, we muſt live in large ſocieties in order to make compariſons: in the ſecond, we muſt mix with thoſe who devote their time to amuſement and idleneſs; for, in the ſocieties where buſineſs is the object, intereſt, not pleaſure, is the guide: and, laſtly, we muſt chuſe our ſociety where the inequality is not great, where the tyranny of opinion is moderated, and where pleaſure has more influence than vanity: for, in the contrary caſe, faſhion overpowers taſte, and we no longer ſeek what pleaſes, but what diſtinguiſhes.

Among all the works of men, none are beautiful but what are the effect

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of imitation. All true models of taſte are found in nature. In proportion as we deviate from this maſter, we diſfigure our pictures; for it is the objects we admire from which we form our models, and thoſe imaginary beauties, being ſubject to caprice and authority, give pleaſure only to thoſe who guide us. Our guides are the artiſts, the great, and rich; their guides are their inſtinct, or their vanity. The former, to make their fortunes; the latter, from an idea of enjoying theirs; vie with each other in the invention of new modes of expence. Thus the empire of luxury is eſtabliſhed, nothing is admired but what is expenſive and difficult of attainment. Hence what is eſteemed moſt beautiful, inſtead of imitating

nature,

nature, is only approved in proportion to the deviation from it. Thus it is evident, that luxury and falſe taſte are inſeparable: wherever taſte is expenſive, it is always falſe.

IMAGINATION.

THE immediate power of the ſenſes is weak and bounded; it is the intervention of the imagination that produces their greateſt effects; it is that which induſtriouſly irritates the deſires by adorning their object with ſo many more attractions than nature has beſtowed on it.

Wretched is he who has nothing to wiſh; all he poſſeſſes is, in a manner, loſt to him; for we feel leſs ſatisfaction from what we obtain than what we deſire; we are only happy by anticipation. In fact, man, formed to deſire all and obtain little, has received from Providence a conſoling power, which brings every thing he deſires within his reach, which ſubjects it to his imagination,

nation, which in ſome ſort delivers it up to him, and, to render this imaginary property more grateful, accommodates or adorns it to his fancy. But all theſe pleaſing deluſions vaniſh when we become poſſeſſed of the object we ſought. We cannot figure to our imagination what we ſee; our fancy does not adorn what we poſſeſs. The illuſion forms or deſtroys the enjoyment.

Habit, in all things, ſuperſedes imagination: it is only new objects which awaken it; on thoſe which come under our daily obſervation, it is not the imagination that is employed, it is the memory, and thence is derived that axiom, *Ab aſſuetis non fit paſſio*; for it is only the fire of the imagination that kindles the paſſions.

It is a general cuſtom to impart

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melancholy news by degrees; but there are perſons who poſſeſs ſuch violent minds, imaginations ſo irritable, that a word will make them carry the idea to its extreme. With ſuch it is better to take a contrary courſe: we ſhould overwhelm them at firſt, in order to make them ſenſible to conſolation.

OPINION AND FORESIGHT.

OPINION, monarch of the univerſe, is ſo far from being ſubject to the power of kings, that they themſelves are its greateſt ſlaves.

In order to give nothing to opinion, we muſt give nothing to authority: the greateſt part of our errors proceed more from others than ourſelves.

Nothing renders a man ſo inſenſible to raillery as being above opinion.

Our foreſight, which carries us perpetually out of ourſelves, and often places us in ſituations we never reach, is the real ſource of all our miſeries. What madneſs in man, whoſe exiſtence is ſo precarious, to dive ſo far into a futurity which ſeldom arrives, and to neglect the preſent time of which he is ſure!

ſure! a madneſs ſo much the more fatal as it increaſes with age; for old men, ever ſuſpicious, provident, and avaricious, would rather deprive themſelves of neceſſaries to-day than want them in an hundred years. Thus we connect ourſelves with all, we make our happineſs depend on all times, places, men, things; all that is, all that will happen, becomes a matter of importance to us. Our immediate concerns obtain the leaſt part of our attention. Each individual extends himſelf, in a manner, over the whole univerſe, and becomes intereſted in all that paſſes on this immenſe ſurface. Is it ſurpriſing, then, that our miſeries ſhould augment in all thoſe points where we are ſuſceptible of pain? That princes are in deſpair for the loſs of a country they have never ſeen? That

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it is ſufficient to attack a merchant in the eaſt, to make him wretched in the weſt? Is it nature which thus carries man beyond himſelf? Is it her will that each ſhould learn his deſtiny from others, and often learn it the laſt, inſomuch that a perſon ſhall die happy or miſerable, without ever having been conſcious of it? I ſee a man, for inſtance, in perfect health, ſpirited, lively, gay, his preſence inſpiring pleaſure, his countenance expreſſing inward content, an image, in ſhort, of complete happineſs. A letter is brought him by the poſt; this happy man opens it: what a change immediately takes place! He turns pale, and falls motionleſs to the ground. When reſtored to himſelf, he weeps, groans, tears his hair, and commits all the extravagancies of a man in deſpair. Senſeleſs

mortal!

mortal! what injury has that paper done you? Has it deprived you of a limb? or cauſed you to commit any crime? In fine, what change has it made in you yourſelf, to occaſion the alteration I have witneſſed? If the letter had miſcarried, if ſome friendly hand had committed it to the flames, the fate of this mortal, happy and miſerable in the ſame moment, would, I think, be a ſtrange problem. His miſery, you will ſay, was real. Very well; but he was not ſenſible of it. Where was it then? His happineſs was imaginary. Then I muſt underſtand that health, chearfulneſs, content, and eaſe, are mere viſions. We no longer exiſt where we are, but where we are not. Is it, then, worth while to be ſo apprehenſive of death, when that in which we live remains?

Ye who are wiſe, confine your exiſtence within its proper bounds yourſelves, and you will no longer be miſerable. Be ſatisfied to remain in the place aſſigned you by nature in the chain of beings; no power can oblige you to quit it. Attempt not to ſtruggle againſt the hard caſe of neceſſity; nor exhauſt in reſiſting it the ſtrength which Providence beſtowed; not to extend or prolong your exiſtence, but only to preſerve it as he wills, and as long as he wills. Your liberty, your power, extends only as far as your natural ſtrength, and not beyond it; all the reſt is ſlavery, illuſion, deception. Though poſſeſſed of ſupreme power, you would be a ſlave, if you ſacrificed to opinion; becauſe, being guided by the prejudices of thoſe who are themſelves governed by prejudice, to conduct

duct yourſelf as you pleaſe, you muſt conſult what pleaſes them. They have only to change their manner of thinking, and you muſt neceſſarily change your manner of acting. Thoſe who approach you have only to know how to guide the opinions of the people whom you imagine you govern, or the opinion of the favourites who govern you, or thoſe of your family, or your own. The miniſters, courtiers, prieſts, ſoldiers, lackeys, even children, if you poſſeſſed all the genius of a Themiſtocles, would lead you like a child yourſelf, though ſurrounded by your legions. Vain is the attempt to extend real authority beyond real faculties. So ſoon as it becomes neceſſary to ſee through the eyes of others, you muſt act as their will directs. My people are my ſubjects, you proudly

ſay. Granted; but you, what are you? The ſubject of your miniſters, who, in their turn, are ſubject to their miſtreſſes, their clerks, the ſervant of their ſervants. Graſp all, uſurp all, then ſcatter gold by handfuls, raiſe batteries of cannon, erect gibbets, wheels, create new laws, edicts, increaſe your number of ſpies, ſoldiers, executioners, priſons, chains; — weak mortal! of what uſe will this be to you? You will be neither better ſerved, nor ſeldomer robbed, nor leſs cheated, nor more abſolute. You will always ſay, We will it ſhould be ſo; but you will always do as others will you ſhould.

THE SENSES.

THE firſt of our faculties which form themſelves and attain perfection are the ſenſes; it is, therefore, thoſe which we ſhould cultivate the firſt, whereas they alone are forgotten, or are the moſt neglected.

The exerciſe of the ſenſes does not conſiſt in merely making uſe of them; it conſiſts in learning to form a true judgment by them, in learning, as I may ſay, to feel, for we can neither touch, ſee, nor hear, but as we have learnt.

The beſt method of learning to judge well, is that which tends moſt to free our experience from all perplexity, and even to enable us to diſpenſe with it, without expoſing us to the

riſk of running into errors; whence it follows, that, after having for a length of time compared the relations of the ſenſes one by the other, we muſt learn to compare the relations of each ſenſe by itſelf, without having recourſe to the others. Thus each ſenſation will then become an idea for us, and that idea will be always conformable to truth.

We are not equally maſter of the uſe of all our ſenſes; there is one, viz. feeling, of which the operations are never ſuſpended while we are awake; it has been extended over the whole ſurface of our bodies as a perpetual guard to warn us of the approach of every thing that is diſagreeable or injurious. It is that from which we ſooneſt gain experience by this continual exerciſe, independently of ourſelves,

ſelves, and conſequently to which we have the leaſt occaſion to give a peculiar cultivation. But, however, it is certain that the feeling of blind men is more nice and accurate than that of others; for, not being guided by their ſight, they are under a neceſſity of learning to draw, from their feeling only, thoſe judgments which our ſight aſſiſts us in forming.

Though feeling is, of all our ſenſes, that which we the moſt continually exerciſe, its deciſions are, notwithſtanding, more imperfect than thoſe of any other, becauſe we perpetually mingle with it the impreſſions received by the ſight; and the eye reaching the object ſooner than the hand, the underſtanding judges almoſt always without it. In return, the deciſions of the touch are more to be depended on, from the

very reaſon that they are more bounded; for, extending themſelves only as far as the hand can reach, they rectify the errors of the other ſenſes, which ruſh from a diſtance on objects they can ſcarcely diſtinguiſh; whereas, all that is judged of by the touch, is well judged. Beſides, having it in our power to add the ſtrength of the muſcles to the action of the nerves, we unite, by a ſimultaneous ſenſation, to the deciſions of the temperature, proportions, and figures, the judgment of weight, and ſubſtance. Hence the feeling being of all our ſenſes that which inſtructs us beſt of the impreſſions which foreign bodies may have on ours, is that which we the moſt frequently exerciſe, and which firſt gives us the knowledge neceſſary for our preſervation.

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In the ſame proportion that the feeling confines all actions within ourſelves, the ſight extends ours beyond ourſelves. This it is that renders the deciſions of the latter ſo incorrect, for with a glance of the eye we can embrace half the horizon. In the multiplicity of ſimultaneous ſenſations and opinions it excites, how ſhall we avoid being deceived in ſome of them? Hence the ſight is the moſt defective of all the ſenſes, exactly becauſe it is the moſt extended, and becauſe, in preceding the others ſo conſiderably, its operations are too haſty, and too immenſe, to be rectified by them.

The ſight and feeling are equally applicable to inanimate as to animated bodies; but, as only the motion of the air can make an impreſſion on the hearing, it is only a moving body that can

can create ſounds. If all was inactive, we ſhould never hear any thing. In the night, therefore, when we ourſelves move but when we chuſe, and have to fear only thoſe bodies that move, it is of conſequence to us to have a quick ear, that we may judge by the ſenſation that we experience, if the body which occaſions it is large, or ſmall, near, or at a diſtance, if its motion is weak, or violent. When the air is put in motion, it is ſubject to repercuſſions that reflect it, and, producing echoes, repeats the ſenſations, and occaſions our hearing bodies of ſound in other places than where they are. If, when in a valley or plain, we put our ear to the ground, the voices of men, or the ſound of horſes feet, are much more perceptible than when we ſtand upright.

We have an organ that anſwers to the

the hearing, which is the voice; but we have none that anſwers in the ſame manner to the ſight: this is an additional means of cultivating the firſt, by exerciſing the active and the paſſive organ one by the other.

We ſhould be poiſoned, or ſtarved to death, if we were obliged to wait till experience taught us to diſtinguiſh and chuſe the food fit for us; but the Supreme Goodneſs, who has ordained that what contributes to the ſatisfaction of rational beings, ſhould alſo be inſtrumental to their preſervation, warns us, by its being agreeable to the palate, of what is beſt ſuited to the conſtitution. There is not naturally a better phyſician for man than his own appetite; and I have no doubt, that, if it were allowed to act only according to the impulſe of its original inclination, we

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ſhould find what was moſt agreeable to the taſte, moſt conducive to the health.

Of all our different ſenſations, that which is produced by the taſte generally affects us the moſt. We are more intereſted in judging of thoſe ſubſtances which are to form a part of ourſelves, than of thoſe which only ſurround us. A thouſand things are indifferent to the feeling, hearing, and ſight, but there is ſcarcely any thing indifferent to the taſte: and, further, the operations of this ſenſe are all material and phyſical; it is the only one which does not ſpeak to the imagination, at leaſt that in the ſenſations of which it has the ſmalleſt ſhare; whereas imitation and imagination frequently connect a degree of morality with the impreſſions of all the others: and I have obſerved, that, in general, the

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hearts moſt ſuſceptible of tenderneſs, the characters moſt empaſſioned and ſenſible, the eaſieſt to be moved by the other ſenſes, are the moſt indifferent in reſpect to this.

Smelling is to the taſte what ſight is to the feeling; it anticipates and gives notice of the manner in which it will be affected by different ſubſtances, and diſpoſes it to ſeek or avoid them according to the impreſſions firſt received.

We may admit a ſort of ſixth ſenſe, called common ſenſe, not ſo much as it is common to all men, as it is the reſult of the proper uſe of the other ſenſes, and that it inſtructs us of the nature of things by the combination of all their appearances. This ſixth ſenſe has, conſequently, no particular organ; it reſides only in the brain, and its ſenſations,

ſations, purely internal, are called perceptions or ideas. It is by the number of theſe ideas that we judge of the extent of a man's knowledge; it is their clearneſs and correctneſs that conſtitutes the juſtneſs of his underſtanding. Hence what I call a ſenſitive or puerile reaſon, conſiſts in forming ſimple ideas by the combination of many ſenſations; and what I call an intellectual or human reaſon, conſiſts in forming complete ideas by the combination of many ſimple ideas.

IDEAS.

THE manner of forming the ideas is what gives a character to the human underſtanding. That underſtanding which forms its ideas only upon the true relation of things, is ſolid; that which contents itſelf with their appearances, is ſuperficial: the underſtanding which ſees the relations as they really exiſt, is juſt; that which appreciates them improperly, is falſe. He who does not compare the relations of things, is ſilly; he who deviſes imaginary relations which have neither foundation nor appearance, is a fool. The degree of aptneſs, either great or ſmall, to compare ideas and diſcover relations, is what conſtitutes the extent

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or conſtruction of a man's underſtanding.

Simple ideas are only compared ſenſations. There are judgments to be formed in ſimple as well as in complicated ſenſations, which I call ſimple ideas. In ſenſation the judgment is purely paſſive; it affirms that we feel what we feel. In perception, or idea, the judgment is active; it approximates, compares, and determines on thoſe relations which are not determined by ſenſe. This is all the difference, but it is conſiderable. Nature never deceives us; it is we who deceive ourſelves.

LANGUAGE AND ACCENT.

LANGUAGES, in changing the ſignifications, regulate alſo the ideas which they repreſent. The underſtanding being formed by languages, the thoughts take the colour from their idioms. Reaſon alone is general. The underſtanding, in every language, has its peculiar form; and to this difference may be owing, in a great meaſure, the cauſe or effect of national characteriſtics. What appears to confirm this conjecture is, that, in every nation, the language, varying according to the viciſſitudes of the morals, is maintained or altered with them.

It is of little conſequence to learn languages for themſelves; their uſe is

not ſo important as is generally believed: but the ſtudy of languages leads to that of univerſal grammar. It is neceſſary to learn Latin, to thoroughly underſtand French: we muſt ſtudy and compare them with each other, in order to know the rules of the art of ſpeaking.

The French, it is aſſerted, is the moſt chaſte of all languages: for my part, I think it quite the reverſe; for it appears to me that the chaſtity of a language does not conſiſt in avoiding improper expreſſions, but in not having them; for to avoid, we muſt think of them. There is not a language in which it is ſo difficult to expreſs the ſenſe with purity, in every reſpect, as the French. The reader, always more ingenious in diſcovering improper meanings,

meanings, than the author in diſcarding them, is ſtartled and ſcandalized at every thing. How is it poſſible to prevent what paſſes through an impure channel from being ſullied? On the contrary, a people whoſe morals are uncorrupted, have proper terms for all things, and thoſe terms are always decent, becauſe they are always decently employed. It is impoſſible to conceive a language more modeſt than that of the Bible, preciſely becauſe every thing is expreſſed ſimply. To render the ſame things immodeſt, it is only requiſite to tranſlate them into French.

To pique ourſelves on not accenting our words, is to boaſt of depriving them of all their grace and energy. Accent is the ſoul of language, it

gives expreſſion and truth to it. Words are leſs to be depended on than accents; the latter often diſcloſe what the former endeavour to conceal. It is for this reaſon, perhaps, that people who have been well educated, are ſo much upon their guard in reſpect to them, ſince from the cuſtom of ſpeaking every thing in the ſame tone is derived that of ridiculing people without their being aware of it. To the proſcription of accent ſucceeds the adoption of thoſe abſurd and affected modes of pronunciation, ſubject to faſhion and caprice, ſo remarkable, in particular, among the young people about the court. This affectation in their ſpeech and manners is what generally renders the addreſs of a Frenchman ſo

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diſagreeable and repulſive to thoſe of other nations: inſtead of marking his words by accents, he marks them by geſtures. This is not the way to prepoſſeſs people in his favour.

SIGNS.

ONE of the errors of this age is to employ the reaſon too naked, as if men were all mind. In neglecting the language of ſigns, which ſpeak to the imagination, we have loſt the moſt emphatical of all languages. The impreſſion of words alone is always weak; we ſpeak to the heart much more forcibly through the eyes than the ears. In ſuppoſing reaſon all ſufficient, we have reduced our precepts to mere words, we allow no power to action. Reaſon alone is never active; it ſometimes reſtrains, but ſeldom excites, and has never been known to produce any thing great. It is the phrenzy of weak underſtandings to be always reaſoning. Strong minds have a very

a very different language, and it is by this that they perſuade, and animate others to action.

The effects produced by the eloquence of the ancients was aſtoniſhing; but this eloquence did not conſiſt merely in a fine diſcourſe of well choſen words; never was the effect greater than when the orator ſpoke the leaſt. Their moſt animated language was not expreſſed by words, but ſigns: they did not ſpeak their meaning; they ſhewed it. The object we exhibit to the eye, ſtrikes the imagination, excites the curioſity, engages the attention to what is going to be ſaid, and often even renders words ſuperfluous. When Thraſybulus and Tarquin cut off the heads of the poppies, when Alexander applied his ſeal to the mouth of his favourite, when Diogenes marched before Zeno,

Zeno, did not they ſpeak more to the purpoſe than if they had held long diſcourſes? Could any elocution have ſo well expreſſed their meaning? When Darius was engaged with his army in Scythia, he received from the king of that country a bird, a frog, a mouſe, and five arrows: the ambaſſador preſented his gift and returned without ſaying a word. In our days this man would have been taken for a madman; but the terrible harangue was underſtood, and Darius took care to regain his own dominions with all poſſible expedition. Had a letter been ſubſtituted in the place of theſe ſigns, the more it menaced, the leſs it would have alarmed. Darius, regarding it as an attempt to bully him, would only have laughed at it.

What attention the Romans paid to the

the language of ſigns! Various habits peculiar to their different ages and rank; their togas, robes, clokes; their bulls, chains, lictors; their faſces, axe, crowns of gold, and triumphs; all was marked by preparation, diſplay, pomp, and ceremony among them, and all made an impreſſion on the minds of the citizens. It was of importance to the ſtate that the people ſhould meet in one place rather than another, that they ſhould or ſhould not ſee the capitol, that they did or did not turn towards the ſenate, that their deliberations ſhould be held in one place preferable to another. The accuſed changed their habits, the candidates did the ſame. The warriors did not boaſt of their exploits, they ſhewed their wounds. I figure to myſelf one of our orators, on the death of Cæſar,

attempting to move the people; he exhauſts all the common-place terms of art, to give a pathetic deſcription of his wounds, his blood, his dead body: Mark Anthony, though himſelf eloquent, ſaid not all this; he produced the body. What rhetoric!

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